

Searching the Web More Efficiently

Ms. Greta E. Marlatt



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Getting Started

Have a strategy in mind before you begin

- **What do you need to do?**
 - Find specific information?
 - Find everything available on your subject?
- **What are the keywords for your topic?**
- **Are there unique words, names or acronyms related to your topic?**
- **Are there specific organizations or groups that would have useful information on their pages?**
- **Are there specific phrases that would help?**
- **Are there helpful synonyms or spelling variations?**
- **Are there common words you can avoid?**
- **Are there irrelevant words or phrases that you could exclude?**



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Internet Search Tools

Types

- **Search Engines**
 - Use software programs known as robots, spiders or crawlers to search the web and build a database of sites. Useful for narrow, well-defined search of many web sites.
- **Meta-Search Engines**
 - Use a single interface to provide simultaneous searching of the most popular search engines. Good for a broad, fast search.
- **Directories or Catalogs**
 - These are hand picked pages, usually annotated and classified or arranged by subject. Ideal for broad category searches
- **Deep or Invisible Web**
 - This is the searchable contents of databases and is generally not found through search engines or directories

<http://library.nps.navy.mil/home/netsearch.htm>



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Internet Search Tools

Specialized Search Engines

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<http://www.google.com/ig/usgov>

Google Scholar

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FedStats

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Political Information

<http://politicalinformation.com>

Science.gov

<http://www.science.gov>



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Search Techniques

Boolean

Boolean Searching identifies documents based on multiple criteria and is useful for expanding or narrowing the search criteria. It is a standard command interface in many databases.

- **AND (+) [narrows the search]**
 - peacekeeping AND security AND Kosovo
 - +vietnam +casualty +statistics
- **OR [expands the search] useful for synonyms or spelling variations**
 - (women OR females) AND combat
 - (“al qaeda” OR “al quida”) AND terrorism
 - “cold fusion energy” OR “hydrogen energy”
- **AND NOT (-) [limits the search]**
 - anthrax AND NOT “heavy metal”
 - terrorism -nuclear



Search Techniques

Phrase and Truncation

Phrase Searching guarantees that a string of words will appear together and in the order typed. Most search engines require quotation marks (“ ”) or it is a search menu option.

Truncation looks for multiple forms of a word. If available, most search engines use an asterisk (*) at the root of the word (e.g. terror* -- terrorist, terrorists, terrorism, terrorizing).



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Search Techniques

Field Searching

Title field

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shortcut: allintitle: terrorism

URL field

This is the address of a page. Restricting your search to addresses that contain a certain word is another way of narrowing a search. This is useful if a file name is part of the URL.

shortcut: allinurl: terrorism



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Find results

with **all** of the words

with the **exact phrase**

with **at least one** of the words

without the words

30 results ▾

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Return pages written in

any language ▾

File Format

▾ return results of the file format

any format ▾

Date

Return web pages updated in the

anytime ▾

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Return results where my terms occur

anywhere in the page ▾

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▾ return results from the site or domain

anywhere in the page

in the title of the page

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Search Tips

- **Know your search tool**
 - Study the instructions, understand the defaults
 - Take advantage of “query by example” or “find other similar sites”
 - Use the “advanced” or “power” search option
 - Resources and search engines change - keep current





Advanced Search

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with **at least one** of the words
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Search Tips

- **Know your search tool**
 - Study the instructions, understand the defaults
 - Take advantage of “query by example” or “find other similar sites”
 - Use the “advanced” or “power” search option
 - Resources and search engines change - keep current
- **Know your subject**
 - Well defined query, precise terminology
 - Put the most important words/terms first
 - Be specific
 - Avoid common words unless they are part of a phrase
- **Think about the most logical place to find the information**
 - Consider what tool would provide the best answer
 - Search engines are not always the best solution
 - Portals, guides or directories



Search Tips

- **Use the site map or site search capability**
 - Look around the site to see if there is other useful information
 - Use the search functions of directories
- **Try field or domain specific searches rather than searching the whole document**
 - More relevant
 - More specific
 - **Shortcut: site:.mil**
- **Try format specific searches**
 - PDF documents often have more content and are more focused
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Search Tips

- **Use the site map or site search capability**
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September 2003

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Search Tips

- **Decide how much time you can afford to spend before you start**
 - Is your search efficient
 - Is it in the right place
 - When do you give in and ask
- **Search the Invisible web**
 - Databases
 - Specific document types [PDF, powerpoint, word etc]
 - Non-print materials [image, audio, video etc.]



“Deep” or “Invisible” Web

★ What is in it?

- “Stuff” that search engines can’t or won’t search
- Dynamically generated pages [cgi, asp, cfm, URL with ?]
- Web accessible databases that require information be typed in
- Certain file formats [e.g. PDF, images, streaming media, etc]
- A lot of the real time data [stock quotes, weather, sports scores, election results etc]
- Commercial resources with domain or IP limitations
- Information residing on an Intranet
- Archives [newspapers]

★ How big is it?

- 400-550 times larger than the surface web
- 7,500 terabytes vs. 19 terabytes

http://www.brightplanet.com/deepcontent/deep_web_faq.asp#DeepWebSize



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Why Use The Deep Web?

- ★ **Quality of content/higher level of authority**
- ★ **Comprehensiveness**
- ★ **Focused**
- ★ **Timeliness**
- ★ **The material isn't available elsewhere on the Web**



When To Use The Deep Web

- ★ **Standard search engines aren't working**
- ★ **A precise answer is needed**
- ★ **Data or statistics are needed**
- ★ **High quality or authoritative results are needed**
- ★ **When timeliness is important**
- ★ **You know the subject area well**
- ★ **Looking for collections [images, sounds, manuscripts etc.]**
- ★ **Reference books online [handbooks, guides, dictionaries, encyclopedias etc.]**



Strategies for Searching The Deep Web

- ★ **Have the mindset of a hunter, detective or passionate collector**
- ★ **Use search engines to get to the front door**
 - ★ **“searchable database”**
 - ★ **“interactive database”**
- ★ **Use the site map to see if databases or statistics are mentioned**
- ★ **Use the site’s internal search tool and search for “database”**
- ★ **Check subject specific discussion groups**



Evaluating Information on the Internet



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The World Wide Web

■ **Who is the author or institution? [AUTHORITY]**

Evaluation Guidelines

- does it include author's bio or information about the institution?
- what is the source's authority, can they be contacted, are they reputable?
- a tilde (~) may indicate a personal page
- check the domain section of the URL
 - .com (commercial) - may be trying to sell a product
 - .edu (educational) -- can be serious research or just student class assignments
 - .gov (government) -- usually dependable
 - .mil (military) -- usually dependable
 - .net (network) -- may provide services to customers
 - .org (organization) -- nonprofit institution, may be biased



The World Wide Web

Evaluation Guidelines

- **How current is the information? [TIMELINESS]**
 - is there a date of when the page was created or last update?
 - is some of the information obviously out of date?
 - do the links work?

- **Is the content accurate and objective? [ACCURACY]**
 - are there biases (political, cultural, religious or institutional)?
 - is the organization reputable?
 - can the facts be checked/verified?
 - if the information has been copied from other sources is this acknowledged?
 - what do others say about the author or organization?



The World Wide Web

Evaluation Guidelines

- **Who is the audience and what is the purpose of the information? [PURPOSE]**
 - is the page intended for the general public or for a specific group (e.g. scholars or children etc.)?
 - is the purpose to inform, explain, persuade, sell a product or advocate a cause?
 - is the purpose clearly stated?
 - what's the tone of the page? [serious? humorous? parody?]
- **How comprehensive is the information? [SCOPE]**

Make Yourself Think Critically
Don't Take the Easy Way Out



Questions?



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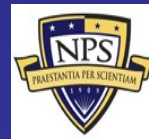


Exercises

- **Begin at the Library's Web Finding Tools page -**
<http://library.nps.navy.mil/home/netsearch.htm>

SEARCH ENGINES

- **Try the following some of the following searches in**
- **Google, AlltheWeb, Ask and HotBot**
 - **Keywords and phrases in quotes**
 - ***nuclear terrorism [with and without quotes] Iraq***
 - **Search within a site**
 - ***Site:.gov "nuclear terrorism"***
 - **Search for a specific file format**
 - ***filetype:.pdf "nuclear terrorism"***



Exercises (2)

META SEARCH ENGINES

- Try searching **cold fusion** in the following Meta Search Engines
 - Dogpile
 - Excite
 - ProFusion

DIRECTORIES

- Try searching **computer security** in the following Directories [under the Webliographies section]
 - Infomine
 - Librarian's Index to the Internet
 - Science.gov



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Exercises (3)

Invisible/Deep Web

- Try searching ***inflation calculator*** in the following sites
 - Complete Planet
 - Incy Wincy

